

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 047687

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TO AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 047687

NODIS

FOR ATHERTON

FOL REPEAT STATE 47687 ACTION SECSTATE INFO TUNIS BONN

27 FEB.

QUOTE

S E C R E T STATE 047687

NODIS

TUNIS FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MO, GW, SS

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION BETWEEN NEA ASSISTANT SECRETARY

ATHERTON AND NIELS HANSEN, MINISTER, FRG EMBASSY,

WASHINGTON.

1. DURING RECENT TALKS IN BONN BETWEEN DEPT COUNSELOR
SONNENFELDT AND FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER, QUESTION AROSE
OF US POLICY TOWARD NORTH AFRICA, AND ESPECIALLY US

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SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 047687

ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WITH MOROCCO. AT SONNENFELDT'S REQUEST,

ATHERTON ARRANGED MEETING WITH ANSEN ON FEBRUARY 25 TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS SUBJECT IN GREATER DETAIL. IN REVIEWING OUR RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO, ATHERTON DESCRIBED THEM AS CLOSE, CORDIAL, AND FRIENDLY. UNDER OUR MILITARY SUPPLY PROGRAM, WE HAVE AGREED TO HELP MODERNIZE MOROCCO'S MODEST ARMED FORCES AND SINCE THE UPGRADING PROGRAM BEGAN ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO WE HAVE SUPPLIED SUCH THINGS AS TANKS, APCS, ARTILLERY, ANTI-AIRCRAFT AND ANTI-TANK WEAPONS, AND AIRCRAFT. WE HAVE JUST CONTRACTED TO SUPPLY A SQUADRON OF 20 F-5ES AND 4 F-5FS. MOST OF THIS EQUIPMENT WILL BE DELIVERED OVER THE NEXT TWO OR THREE YEARS ALTHOUGH SOME ITEMS ALREADY HAVE BEEN SHIPPED. AT MOROCCO'S REQUEST WE ARE LOOKING INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF SPEEDING UP DELIVERIES BUT THE POSSIBILITIES ARE LIMITED BECAUSE OF COMMITMENTS TO OTHER CLIENTS AND LONG PRODUCTION LEAD TIMES.

2. ATHERTON POINTED OUT THAT OUR ARMS SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP IS NOT RELATED TO CURRENT GOM-SAHARA ISSUE. OUR POLICY ON THE SAHARA IS THAT WE SHOULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED IN THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DISPUTE. WE VOTED FOR THE SO-CALLED PRO-MOROCCAN RESOLUTION AND ABSTAINED ON THE PRO-ALGERIAN RESOLUTION BECAUSE THE FORMER TOOK NOTE OF THE TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT WHICH WE FELT OFFERED THE MOST PROMISING ROUTE TOWARD A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT AT THAT TIME. HOWEVER, THE GOA DOES NOT CONSIDER THAT AGREEMENT TO BE A LEGAL BASIS FOR TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY IN THE SAHARA AND DEMANDS A REFERENDUM. ALGERIA HAS IN FACT RECEIVED VERY LITTLE SUPPORT FOR ITS POSITION FROM THE ARAB COUNTRIES AND THERE ARE DIFFERENCES AMONG AFRICAN STATES ON THE QUESTION. IN ADDITION TO WANTING TO STAY OUT OF THE DISPUTE OURSELVES, WE HOPE THAT ITS INTERNATIONALIZATION BY NON-REGIONAL POWERS CAN BE AVOIDED. FOR THIS REASON WE FAVOR UN AND VARIOUS ARAB MEDIATION EFFORTS INCLUDING THE CURRENT RIAD MISSION WHICH WE HOPE WILL LEAD TO PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION FROM HANSEN AS TO WHAT WE MEANT BY INTERNATIONALIZATION, ATHERTON SPECIFIED SOVIET INTERVENTION. ATHERTON WENT ON TO GIVE MORE DETAILS OF OUR FMS AND COMMERCIAL MILITARY SALES TO MOROCCO. HE SAID THAT BASICALLY WE WANT TO BE HELPFUL AND SUPPORTIVE TO MOROCCO BUT REMAIN ON GOOD TERMS WITH ALGERIA WITH WHOM WE HAVE SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 047687

HAD GOOD RELATIONS. ALTHOUGH THE GOA REGARDS OUR POLICY AS ANTI-ALGERIAN, WE DO NOT AGREE AND WILL NOT LET THIS INHIBIT US IN AIDING MOROCCO. ATHERTON NOTED THAT ALGERIA IS MUCH STRONGER MILITARILY THAN MOROCCO AND EXPRESSED OUR CONVICTION THAT THE GOM'S DEFENSIVE NEEDS ARE LEGITIMATE.

3. ATHERTON TOLD HANSEN THAT IF MOROCCO SHOULD INDICATE

ANY INTEREST IN MILITARY PURCHASES FROM THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND IF GERMANY SHOULD SEEK OUR VIEWS, WE WOULD SAY THAT THIS IS A DECISION WHICH GERMANY ITSELF MUST MAKE. HOWEVER, GERMANY CAN SEE WHAT THE US IS DOING AND WE WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM IF GERMANY SHOULD SHOW SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT FOR MOROCCO.

4. ATHERTON INFORMED HANSEN OF HIS IMMINENT DEPARTURE FOR TUNISIA, ALGERIA, AND MOROCCO. HE SAID THE TRIP GREW OUT OF FACT THAT UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON WAS MAKING A LONG-PLANNED VISIT TO ALGERIA FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL TALKS AND THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER THOUGHT IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR ATHERTON TO BE THERE AT THE SAME TIME TO DISCUSS A FULLER RANGE OF SUBJECTS. ALSO SINCE HE WOULD BE IN THE AREA IT WAS DECIDED HE SHOULD GO TO TUNISIA AND MOROCCO AS

WELL. ATHERTON EXPLAINED THAT HIS VISIT WAS NOT SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO THE SAHARA DISPUTE BUT OBVIOUSLY THE SUBJECT WILL BE DISCUSSED. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WOULD NOT ENGAGE IN ANY MEDIATION EFFORTS.

5. HANSEN ASKED WHAT WE THOUGHT WOULD HAPPEN AFTER SPAIN WITHDREW FROM THE SAHARA ON THE 28TH. ATHERTON REPLIED THAT IN FACT THE SAHARA IS DIVIDED AND BEING ADMINISTERED BY MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA. REALISTICALLY KING HASSAN WILL NOT ACCEPT A REFERENDUM NOR WILL ALGERIA ACCEPT A FAIT ACCOMPLI. THE GOA PROBABLY WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT POLISARIO. IN ANSWER TO QUERIES FROM HANSEN, ATHERTON SAID THAT POLISARIO APPEARS TO HAVE LOST CONTROL OF THE POPULATION CENTERS BUT IS STILL CONDUCTING GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES. USG HAS NO EVIDENCE OF CUBAN OR NORTH VIETNAMESE INVOLVEMENT IN THE SAHARA. SINCE SOVIETS SUPPLY ALGERIA MILITARILY THEY PROBABLY HAVE ADVISERS WITHIN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 047687

ALGERIA BUT WE HAVE NO REPORTS OF SOVIETS IN SAHARA ITSELF. IN RESPONSE TO HANSEN'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN THAT SAHARA MIGHT TURN INTO ANOTHER ANGOLA, ATHERTON REPLIED THAT SO FAR THIS HAS NOT HAPPENED AND OUR WHOLE APPROACH IS TO KEEP THIS FROM OCCURRING. HE NOTED THAT THE MOROCCAN PRIME MINISTER HAD BEEN WELL RECEIVED IN MOSCOW RECENTLY AND INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE USSR WANTS TO RETAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH MOROCCO AND ALGERIA.

6. HANSEN SAID HIS GOVERNMENT HAD HAD A REPORT FROM ITS EMBASSY IN DAMASCUS ABOUT PLANS FOR SYRIAN-JORDANIAN JOINT ADMINISTRATION OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AND RUMORED US INVOLVEMENT IN THIS ARRANGEMENT. ATHERTON REPLIED THAT THIS IS AN IDEA THE US HAS NOT CONSIDERED, LET ALONE SUGGESTED. WE ARE STILL CONSULTING WITH THE ISRAELIS AND

PERHAPS NEXT WEEK WILL RECOMMENCE FURTHER TALKS. IF SOME-ONE PROPOSED SUCH AN IDEA, WE WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER IT, BUT ISRAEL WOULD HAVE DIFFICULT TIME ACCEPTING SUCH A PROPOSAL. END ATHERTON-HANSEN MEMCON.

7. AT HIS REQUEST, MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR CAME IN TO SEE UNDER SECRETARY SISCO AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 25. AFTER THANKING SISCO FOR US SUPPORT, DIRECTLY, AND INDIRECTLY THROUGH IRANIANS AND JORDANIANS, HE PRESENTED A LIST OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT THAT MOROCCO IS REQUESTING FROM WEST GERMANY AND ASKED WE GIVE GERMANS OUR "GREEN LIGHT" TO PROVIDE REQUESTED MATERIEL. SISCO INFORMED BOUTALEB THAT AT MEETING WITH GERMAN EMBASSY THIS MORNING, ATHERTON HAD INFORMED GERMANS OF WHAT WE ARE PROVIDING TO MOROCCO AND HAD SAID THAT WE WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTIONS TO GERMANS BEING FORTHCOMING TO SIMILAR MOROCCAN REQUESTS. INGERSOLL

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